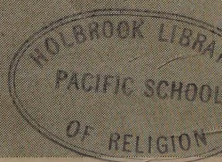


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Power Politics and the Christian Conscience

By Vernon H. Holloway

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A Preface to "Power Politics and the Christian Conscience"

The political consequences of pacifism in the United States for the world of 1950 are wholly different from the consequences of American pacifism for, say, the world of 1900. In that earlier day, the spread of religious pacifism in America could not have threatened the freedom of the democratic nations of Europe. To be a pacifist today is to be pacifist at somebody else's expense. This is a wholly different thing from bearing personally the responsibility for the consequences of one's pacifist position.

Dr. Holloway's discussion of "Power Politics and the Christian Conscience" is a timely reminder that the tempering of power and the extension of international justice can only be achieved by finding some way of restraining those who would today dictate on the basis of superior power. It is not enough today simply to be pure in heart, for the feeling of purity tends to disappear when one examines the political consequences of pacifist policy. Such policy would deny the responsibility which is so clearly inescapable for a nation which has become powerful almost in spite of itself.

Like the pacifists, the isolationists would deny the responsibility of America in the world. Isolationism has many and complex roots in American soil. When it takes the form of willingness to intervene in European and Asiatic politics accompanied by unwillingness to collaborate, it results in the policy of the "big stick." Against this particular abuse of power the church can struggle effectively only if its members can become clear as to the proper uses of our national strength.

Another form of isolationism is to urge policy as if the rest of the world did not exist. This is the isolationism of those who thought that Europe was a long distance away until the collapse of the Maginot Line. It is predicated on an unchristian denial of the brotherhood of man. Against this isolationism,

too, the church can make an effective attack, provided the Christian conscience is permitted to operate on the basis of informed understanding of world politics.

The isolationism which is associated with the growth of pacifist sentiment in the Protestant churches between the two world wars is based neither on non-collaboration nor on escapism. As Dr. Holloway points out, it would have the United States play the role of the "Good Samaritan." The vigorous argument which follows shows how incomplete such a conception is as a total American foreign policy. While pacifists frequently translate ideals of international service into beneficent action, the political consequences which would follow from a growth of pacifist sentiment in our country might well make war more rather than less likely. It is a paradox that the effectiveness of the inspiring work done by such organizations as the American Friends Service Committee depends very largely upon the maintenance of the American reputation for power in Europe and Asia.

WILLIAM T. R. FOX*

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Power Politics and the Christian Conscience

Vernon H. Holloway

In what directions have American Christians been moving as they have undertaken to deal with the problem of power in world politics? What are some of the basic patterns of response, particularly in Protestant circles, when issues arise in United States foreign policy concerning national and international security and the employment of power? How much unity is there among the religious agencies which speak to the nation concerning these problems?

Unless we are aware of the directions in which we have been moving we will be ill-prepared for the duties which lie ahead. If some of the positions which were popular a few years ago, such as support of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, are no longer deemed relevant today, what is replacing them? If churchmen are divided today on the merits of the North Atlantic Pact, should this be an occasion for surprise or does it reveal a split within the churches with roots in the past?

The Cleveland Conference: Unity and Disunity

When the National Study Conference on the Churches and World Order was held in Cleveland, Ohio (March, 1949) under the auspices of the Federal Council of Churches, there

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A graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University, Dr. Holloway received his B.D. and Ph.D. degrees from Yale University. His doctoral thesis dealt in part with the subject of this issue of *Social Action*. He has participated in the world order study conferences of the Federal Council of Churches from 1942 to 1949.

was essential agreement that the primary task of the Church is to proclaim the Gospel of repentance and reconciliation. The first of the guiding principles voiced in the conference report stressed the need for faith in God, for penitence and humility, for spiritual strength to act without egotism and to serve the neighbor and forgive the enemy. This echoed the classical Christian conviction that the Church is primarily concerned with the motivations of men rather than with technical judgments about political and economic programs.

The other guiding principles of the conference report suggested agreement, at least on the theoretical level, regarding the conference theme: "Moral Responsibility and United States Power." Power, although not clearly defined, was held to be a trust for which men and nations are accountable to God. The power of the nation was therefore a means which it should use on behalf of peace, order and justice in cooperation with others and with the United Nations. American military power was regarded as a danger insofar as it might corrupt the people, harden their hearts, and enhance their pride. Yet power was not denounced as such but was to be employed for constructive ends.¹

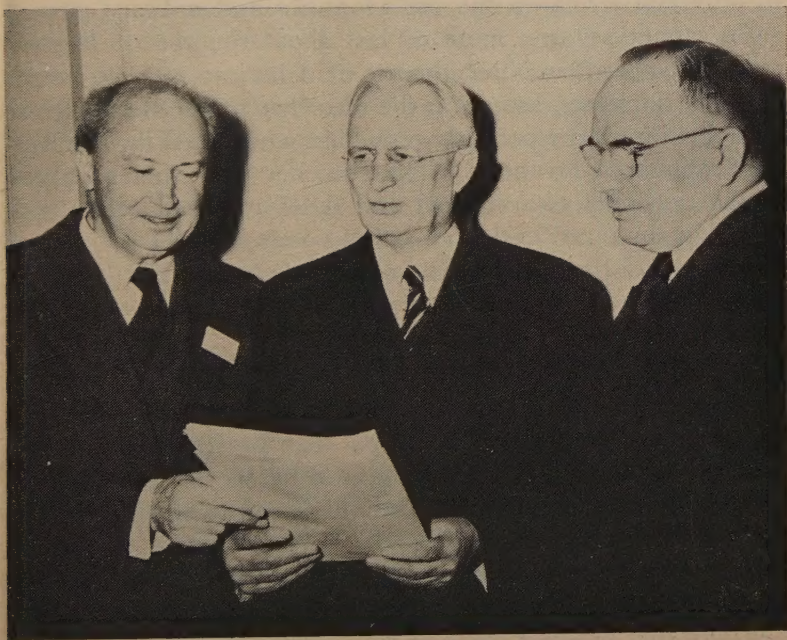
Tension and disagreement existed at Cleveland although they were barely manifest in the conference report. The most controversial issue was the North Atlantic Pact. The majority of the delegates were apparently willing to grant the legitimacy of regional security arrangements if these were "within the U.N. framework" and were not military alliances for aggressive purposes. The burden of achieving a conference report without serious division was eased by the fact that the final text of the treaty was not yet available for study, and the conference therefore did not pronounce a verdict upon the North Atlantic Pact itself. In the words of one delegate, who sharply opposed the treaty: "It is extremely doubtful whether a vote

1. *Message and Findings*, Third National Study Conference on the Churches and World Order (New York, Federal Council of Churches, 1949), pp. 17-19.

to endorse the Pact could have been carried because so many believed that it was essentially a military measure and were profoundly uneasy on that account."²

There were diverse opinions on the related issue of American military strength. A majority of the conference was willing to conclude that the United States "must maintain sufficient strength to convince Soviet Russia that attempts to impose an

2. A. J. Muste, *The Dilemma of the Churches*, a statement mailed by the Fellowship of Reconciliation (New York, March, 1949), p. 1.



Religious News Service

Power was not denounced as such but was to be employed for constructive ends, the National Study Conference on the Churches and World Order held at Cleveland concluded. Pictured are three bishops holding an informal consultation between sessions at the conference. They are (left to right): Protestant Episcopal Bishop William Scarlett of St. Louis; Bishop John S. Stamm of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, President of the Federal Council of Churches; and Methodist Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam of New York.

ideology by force cannot succeed." But a minority held "that the attempt temporarily to maintain the huge military force adequate to balance Russian military power and to force 'moderation' of Soviet policy provides only the illusion of security," and would lead to a continuance of the cold war and the armaments race.³

The minority position, essentially a pacifist one, was expressed in the conference plenary session when one of the Quaker delegates declared that the Church should only speak in universal terms on the use of police and military power: "We cannot say any more or less about the use of Russian military power than about the use of American military power without, ourselves, accepting the idea that the ends justify the means, which we vigorously repudiate when used by our Russian communist brothers."⁴ The churches were thereby urged to sanction only disarmament and relief measures while condemning any resort to the politics of power, and the nation was urged to trust the Soviet Union and not to bolster the defensive military strength of Western Europe.

The Social Results of Contradictory Testimony

The churches and their agencies have a responsibility for speaking to the nation. The Gospel they profess points to the creating, judging and redeeming God before Whom all men are accountable, and Who bids us "to serve the neighbor." The churches cannot be the "Church" if they ignore the social aspect of their religious faith. Responsibility "to God and for the neighbor" does not exist in isolation from the motives and behavior that produce peace or war, justice or injustice, disease or health in the social order.

But when the churches and their agencies give counsel to

3. *Message and Findings*, p. 33.

4. "Moral Responsibility and United States Power," a statement read before the conference by Norman Whitney, and printed subsequently in *The Friend*, March 24, 1949.

the nation, and the advice given is divided and contradictory, they serve to confuse rather than to guide the larger society of which they are a part. Insofar as Congress, the White House and the State Department are concerned to discover what the American people think on questions of military power and political security, they find that the testimonies of religious agencies contradict one another almost as much as do the pressure groups of secular society.

The findings of the Cleveland conference were addressed primarily to the churches themselves, particularly to the Protestant groups affiliated with the Federal Council. But the differences of conviction which were vocal in the discussion at Cleveland are clearly revealed in the testimonies of religious agencies at Congressional hearings on proposals for American foreign policy. On such issues as economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey in 1947, the North Atlantic Treaty and the Mutual Defense Assistance Pact in 1949, Congressional committees listened to contradictory recommendations from Christian organizations.

On Aid to Greece and Turkey in 1947

When the Senate and House Foreign Affairs Committees received testimonies on the proposed legislation for economic and military aid to Greece and for economic aid to Turkey, the Council for Social Action (Congregational Christian) stated that it recognized the need for both forms of aid, while urging that additional steps be taken to enlist wherever possible the cooperation and supervision of United Nations agencies.

The General Secretary of the Federal Council of Churches expressed a similar position taken by the Executive Committee of that agency, suggesting to the Senate committee the following proposals: If Soviet Russian foreign policy is aggressive, the United States has the obligation to discourage it, but also to seek settlement of conflicting interests; the United Nations

*Acme*

Churches gave contradictory recommendations on such issues as economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey in 1947. Above: Turkish soldiers help unload a heavy duty military truck, part of U.S. aid for Turkey.

is not at present equipped to solve such problems as the one in Greece, but the United States should not hesitate to inform the U.N. of its plans, to seek its counsel and to invite inspection of economic aid.

The Congregational Christian agency and the Federal Council Executive Committee were therefore taking the position that American power must be used, where necessary, to discourage Soviet imperialism; that if Greece suffered from economic privation and also was politically endangered by the Soviet bloc, then American aid was necessary. With respect to the United Nations both agencies were saying: the internal

need and the external threat to Greece must be dealt with, through the U.N. where possible, outside of it where necessary. The Soviet Union already had made it clear that no police action against its eastern satellites could be taken through the Security Council.

An opposing view was taken by several other religious agencies, which advised the Congressmen to provide economic aid and to withhold any military supplies or military counsel. Spokesmen for the American Friends Service Committee, the Baptist Council on Christian Social Progress, the Methodist World Peace Commission, the Disciples Department of Social Welfare and the Fellowship of Reconciliation were unanimous in urging economic aid for relief and reconstruction and in denouncing any provision for American military supplies. A bilateral treaty between the Greek and American governments involving military equipment and counsel was denounced as a "betrayal of the U.N.," "needless antagonizing of the Soviet Union," and an "immoral resort to power politics."

These spokesmen, insofar as they referred to the political crisis in Eastern Europe, urged that it be "turned over to the United Nations," or that a "third alternative to appeasement or intervention" be investigated.⁵ As one of them put it, "We denounce violence and coercion . . . and adhere strictly to the program of Jesus summed up in the phrase 'the kingdom of God on earth.'"

The Statesman's Dilemma

If members of Congress take the testimony of churchmen seriously they will be confused by the diverse positions taken on American foreign policy. If they take the testimony lightly they may be moved to amusement if not ridicule. If they aspire to practice Christian principles in their decisions as statesmen

5. See the following Congressional documents: *Aid to Greece and Turkey*, Hearings Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, March, 1947; *Aid to Greece and Turkey*, Hearings Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, March-April, 1947.

they may well agree that the conversion of the nations and their mutual repentance and reconciliation are needed. But in that case they will also be justified in asking the professional spokesmen of religious agencies if the latter are prepared to face the facts of life and the statesman's dilemma.

The men who are responsible for determining public policies must act *now*. They cannot await the conversion of the nations. Nor can they expect the churches to achieve in the near future what they have failed to achieve in nineteen centuries of church history. Moreover, the rare Congressman who knows his Scripture well may conclude that the Bible contains no promise that goodness and generosity will displace selfishness and the struggle for power in human history.

Since the statesman must deal critically with the problem of practical politics, where the struggle for power is a constant element, he is justified in demanding that the proposals of religious groups reckon with the limitations of political action. He is unable to act on the basis of the Sermon on the Mount, although he frequently is urged to do so by religious idealists. He must legislate for a society in which good and evil are mixed, in which the problem of order and the restraint of evil is constant.

Let us consider the advice of religious groups which testified concerning the North Atlantic Treaty.

Religious Testimony on the North Atlantic Pact

The representatives of religious bodies which voiced sharp disapproval of the treaty, urged one or more of the following alternatives: (a) "support the United Nations," (b) "work for disarmament," (c) develop an American policy "of goodwill and world friendship," (d) seek "world order with a world police force."

The treaty was condemned on the grounds that "peaceful alternatives" such as the above were available, that the proposed pact was a form of "cold war" and "power politics,"

that it was "not in accord with certain basic tenets of the Christian faith calling for methods of goodwill and world brotherhood," and that "the primary goal of Christians is not military defense but the establishment of peace and order."⁶

The statement presented for the Methodist World Peace Commission was ambiguous, noting various arguments for and against the pact, concluding "by withholding support for the pact, while urging that it be given full and free discussion." The speaker for the Woman's Division of Christian Service (also of the Methodist Church) indicated support of the treaty if it were amended so as to be open to all nations wishing to join.

The chairman of the Department of International Justice and Goodwill of the Federal Council of Churches indicated the concern of his Department, in the event that the pact were ratified, that further efforts be made to seek world economic recovery and to achieve political settlement of disputes between the major powers.

The Catholic Association for International Peace supported the treaty. The American Council of Christian Churches (a fundamentalist group) hailed the pact in view of the "threat of atheistic communism."

The Diversity of Christian Political Judgments

The testimonies of religious agencies therefore ranged from denunciation of the treaty to unreserved support.

The sharpest critics took a religious pacifist position in which (a) the *Christian* could never support the use of military power under any circumstances and (b) it was wrong for the *nation* to employ military strength for any political end.

A modified pacifist position was held by some who, while

6. See the Congressional Record: *North Atlantic Treaty*, Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, May, 1949; also *Mutual Defense Assistance Pact*, Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, July-August, 1949. Note especially the statements of the following agencies: Friends Committee on National Legislation, Brethren Service Commission, Fellowship of Reconciliation.

condemning the regional security pact, were willing to support a world police force under the auspices of the United Nations or a world government.

Support of the pact was combined with reservations as some of the spokesmen voiced their concern that this security measure, which they regarded as necessary for Western European protection, should not detract from American support of economic aid and continued negotiation with the Soviet Union.

Ratification of the treaty was readily endorsed only by the representative of the fundamentalist religious group, who was chiefly concerned with the fight against "atheistic communism."

The divergence of religious testimonies on the North Atlantic Pact in 1949, as in the case of the Greek and Turkish aid program in 1947, indicates a serious cleavage in American Christianity with respect to the meaning of Christian faith, the nature of man and society, and the relation of morals to politics in the realm of international relations.

It is only on humanitarian issues such as American immigration policy and the liberal admission of displaced persons that a considerable degree of common conviction is voiced by religious groups on specific issues in American foreign policy. There is a notable margin of agreement in positions taken on economic matters that are more remote from the international struggle for power, such as support for reciprocal trade agreements and for the International Trade Organization. But when issues arise in which national policy must respond directly to the anarchy of world politics, taking sides and making commitments in the difficult quest for national and international security, the spokesmen of religious organizations are divided.

Agreement on the Role of the Good Samaritan

It appears obvious to religious groups that the wealthy nation to which they belong should pursue a generous policy in aiding world relief and reconstruction, and in finding homes and jobs for displaced persons. The parable of the Good



Acme

The testimonies of religious agencies on the Atlantic Pact ranged from denunciation of the treaty to unreserved support. Above: Senate Secretary Leslie Biffle signs the Senate's Resolution to ratify the Atlantic Pact. Looking on are (left to right): Sen. Scott Lucas, Sen. Tom Connally, Vice-President Alben Barkley, and Sen. Arthur Vandenberg.

Samaritan clearly applies here, and the churches are able to exert considerable leadership in quickening the conscience of the nation. The principle of stewardship is applied to American economic resources whenever a humanitarian issue arises that is not directly involved in international political conflict. When economic aid to foreign nations gets involved in the "cold war," as in the case of Soviet Russian opposition to the Marshall Plan, there is less unanimity of support by religious groups.

So long as the Samaritan faces only the victim of social injustice or misfortune, and can act without reference to the

restraint of injustice and aggression, the answer to the question of responsibility is clear.

But How About the Policeman's Task?

It is with much greater difficulty and no little confusion that American religious bodies, particularly the Protestant groups, have endeavored to deal with the ethics of power. They have been most hesitant on the subject of American commitments for the enforcement of peace and the prevention of aggression in world affairs. They have frequently given the impression that where the nation cannot act like the Good Samaritan it should not act at all. But the parable of the Good Samaritan deals with only one aspect of stewardship and responsibility, and provides no model for political action to deter would-be aggressors or for military action to restrain them forcibly.

Preoccupation With Ideal Ends

Christian thinking in America on foreign affairs has been predominantly concerned with the ideal ends of political action, and has conceived of the means in terms of the ends. It has tended to concentrate upon blueprints and ideal solutions rather than upon the concrete issues and alternatives, wherever the problem of coercive action had to be faced by the nation. The national study conference of the Protestant churches at Delaware, Ohio, in 1942, was able to achieve a statement of guiding principles for the postwar world but could not agree upon the ethics of war. The political propositions which followed in 1943, known as the "Pillars of Peace," helped to create and sustain interest in achieving a new postwar world organization. These propositions, however, were devoted to the ideal requirements of a postwar order, and many of their supporters apparently assumed that organization guarantees co-operation.

When a second study conference was held in 1945 at Cleveland, Ohio, the Dumbarton Oaks proposals for a United Nations Charter confronted the churchmen. Several amendments

were proposed by the conference in the light of the earlier Delaware principles. A majority of the Cleveland delegates were apparently willing to criticize the charter with the hope of improving it while preparing to support eventual American ratification.

A minority, however, were deeply disturbed by the charter's provision for an international police force and by the special responsibilities assigned to the great powers for enforcing peace. Some of them condemned the charter "because five nations will have dominant power," and because the proposed organization did not "reflect righteousness, democracy and true world government." *The Christian Century* editorially had urged the conference at Cleveland to condemn and to forget the Dumbarton Oaks proposals, then later maintained that the conference report should be interpreted to mean support for American ratification only if all of the proposed amendments were enacted. To critics of this type it appeared that the churches' task was to uphold perfection and to denounce any compromise regardless of what the political consequences might be.

The Optimist-Idealist Heritage

It should therefore be no occasion for surprise if American Christian leaders and agencies are confused and divided on contemporary issues where statesmen must deal with the problems of political and military power. Underlying the above debates and divergent positions in Christian circles from 1942 to 1949, there persists the religious-social idealism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and the pacifist mentality of the period between the two world wars.

As the social gospel arose in American Protestantism from 1865 to 1915 it was primarily concerned with the problems of a domestic society which was experiencing the rise of cities and industries. Exponents of this gospel became deeply concerned with the achievement of a "Christian social order." But some

who proclaimed this gospel and many who responded to its call were influenced considerably by the evolutionary optimism of the period. In seeking to correct the social conservatism and the outworn individualism of Protestant economic ethics they encouraged the belief that man can "produce the Kingdom of God on earth." For Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918) the primary reality to which men must respond was the sovereign will of God, Who demands righteousness and justice; but to numbers of his contemporaries the basic reality was a society without evil which men must be on their way to achieve.

If our present need is to understand the sources of contemporary dogmas about Christian principles and the politics of power, there are two aspects of the early twentieth century social gospel that need to be noted. One is the evolutionary optimism that entered into much of its theology, permitting men to think in utopian terms about the possibilities of social action and political reform. The other is the fact that the social gospel prior to 1918 was concerned with domestic problems and not with the issues of international life. The minority within the churches who upheld the Christian social emphasis were no less startled and dismayed than were the churches and the nation at large when the First World War broke forth.⁷ When the spokesmen of social Christianity endeavored later to deal with international problems their social idealism was reinforced by conceiving of international relations in terms of domestic life. This false but popular conception of the nature of international politics influences American peace movements even today.

Military Crusade and Disillusionment

In 1917 pacifism was little known in the Protestant churches. The war came as a surprise, and when the nation became a belligerent the churches responded by regarding the war as a

7. It was not until 1932 that *The Social Ideals of the Churches*, adopted by the Federal Council of Churches in 1912, were expanded to include the "repudiation of war" and the need for international organization.

means of crusading for democracy. In general, the Allied cause was proclaimed to be a holy crusade, and what few pacifists there were suffered considerable ostracism.⁸ The cynicism of the secular world, following the utopianism of the wartime period, found its parallel in liberal Protestant groups in a wave of disillusionment and a sense of guilt resulting in an expansion of pacifist thought and numbers. The zeal with which the war was fought was matched by the solemnity with which numerous religious leaders pledged that they would never sanction or participate in another war. Hence the proclamation of a particular war as a holy crusade was disowned and in its place there developed a holy crusade against all war.

The Older Pacifism of Nonresistance

It is interesting to note the grounds upon which religious pacifism arose in American Protestantism in the twenties and thirties. In the modern world previous to this period military service was condemned as unchristian and shunned on religious grounds only by such groups as the historic peace churches—the Friends, Brethren, and Mennonites.

But the *nonresistant pacifism* of the Church of the Brethren and of the Mennonites, which accounted for most of the conscientious objectors among drafted men in World War I, had never attempted to provide a solution for national or international strife. The nonresistant pacifist entertained no responsibility for resisting social evil or reforming society. He refused not only the soldier's role but that of the judge and statesman as well. Yet he respected the State as a divinely ordained and necessary authority for the provision of order in a sinful society. He regarded wars as inevitable, and the police and military forces as useful, but saw all of this as belonging to a corrupt and alien world from which he must separate himself.

The optimism of the social gospel and the challenge of the

8. As to the religious crusade and also the ostracism of pacifists, see Ray Abrams, *Preachers Present Arms* (New York, 1933).

pacifist crusade against war were alien notions to the historic Brethren and Mennonite peace testimony which had nothing to do with the achievement of "worldly peace." Biblical injunctions against resistance to evildoers and against "bloodshed" were regarded as absolute rules for the Christian but not as standards for the social order. In short, nonresistant pacifism for these two peace churches was not a political ethic. They were the chief source of conscientious objectors in wartime, but their pessimism concerning man and secular society contradicted the optimism and activism of liberal social Christianity.

Only when the traditional separatism and other-worldliness of the Brethren became weakened, and was displaced by liberal optimistic beliefs, did Brethren individuals and occasional groups support the pacifist movement of the thirties. The recent testimony of the Brethren Service Commission against the North Atlantic Treaty is inconceivable on the basis of their historic tradition and reflects the comparatively recent shift in their religious and social views. As a prominent official and historian of the Church of the Brethren stated: "The Brethren moved from the Mennonite position, which is that of living as guests in a country, toward the position of the Society of Friends—that of accepting responsibilities for citizenship."⁹

The Religious Pacifism of the Friends

The Friends have played a prominent role in the liberal pacifist crusade to renounce war and to displace coercive power in international politics with methods of "goodwill, mutual trust, and peaceful negotiation." It was not difficult for the Friends as it was for the Brethren and especially for the Mennonites to participate in the liberal pacifism that arose after World War I. The Friends in fact provided much of the leadership. This was partly because the Quaker tradition, while it called for refusal to participate in military service, was always hope-

9. Rufus Bowman, *The Church of the Brethren and War* (Elgin, Ill., 1944), p. 329.

ful of influencing society in humanitarian directions. They seldom separated themselves from the social order as did the other peace churches.

When Quakers withdrew from public service in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in order to avoid the compromise of military action or of legislative enactment of military budgets, they frequently addressed moral appeals to the entire community. They were in the forefront of the antislavery movement, and pioneered in rendering humanitarian service to the victims of war.

Like the Brethren and the Mennonites it has been their tradition to refuse to fight. But unlike the other two peace churches they have entertained high hopes for the transformation of society and the removal of injustice and war. (As a Mennonite leader and historian sees it: "Many Quakers are not inclined to view the sinful nature of human society as seriously as the Mennonites do.")¹⁰

The Quaker Specialty and the Quaker Dilemma

Because of their contrast with the other peace churches Quakers were more prominent in peace movements and in the pacifist crusade. But thereby they incurred grave risks and became involved in questionable performances.

In both of the world wars they did a notable job of administering relief in a nonpartisan spirit to the war victims. They became specialists in the role of the Good Samaritan. But when it came to applying the principles of love and goodwill to the political alternatives that faced the nation from 1939 through 1941, the Friends who were most active in religious and secular pacifist movements were inclined to place a religious halo around American neutrality. Since they condemned war as evil and military force as immoral, prominent Friends testified against Selective Service legislation, against "Lend-Lease" aid.

10. Guy F. Hershberger, *War, Peace and Non-Resistance* (Scottsdale, Pa., 1944), p. 206.

to Britain, and pleaded for a "negotiated peace."

The Good Samaritan not only could not act as the policeman (or as the citizen who intervenes in the absence of police when order and justice are at stake in the neighborhood) but he sought to prevent the nation from taking such action.¹¹ The Peace Section of the American Friends Service Committee condemned military action on two grounds: its "inherent evil," and its "futility." These were also the primary arguments of the liberal pacifist movement that became influential in the traditionally nonpacifist Protestant churches.

Pacifism and the Protestant Churches, 1925-1941

The larger Protestant bodies whose historical tradition permitted military service included the Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Disciples, Congregationalists, Unitarians, and the Evangelical and Reformed Church. As churches of Lutheran, Anglican, Calvinist, or eighteenth and nineteenth century evangelical heritage, they persistently differed from the historic peace churches in their attitude toward war. They had never considered withdrawal from the civil or military sphere to be obligatory for their members. Their social principles were those of the "church" rather than the "sect," seeking to influence and to include the society about them rather than to develop and to maintain a separate and perfectionist community. If the defense of the nation or the pursuit of justice required military action, the doctrine of these churches permitted or sanctioned it. The Christian could act as Samaritan or as soldier, since the State was regarded neither as an alien and evil sphere nor as an institution which could perform its tasks on the basis of the Sermon on the Mount.

These Protestant denominational bodies provided little restraint upon the nationalistic and idealistic fervor of the nation at war in 1917-1918. But the enthusiasm with which many of

11. There are echoes of this position in contemporary statements of the American Friends Service Committee and of the Friends Committee on National Legislation.



Religious News Service

Liberal religious pacifism did much to protect freedom of conscience and to remind the churches that no war could be holy, that war was an evil thing. But in the name of the "Christian way" the political policies of isolationism and neutrality were encouraged. Above: Thirty-six ministers from various Protestant denominations formed a picket line on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House to protest the continued imprisonment of 1200 conscientious objectors.

their clergy endorsed the war was later matched by their fervor in "renouncing war" and in seeking for its "abolition." This was particularly true of the denominational leaders and agencies which were most receptive to the idealism and optimism of the social gospel, such as the Methodists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Northern Baptists and Unitarians. Their extravagant hopes for the good society to follow the war had been dashed, and now they turned with equal hope to the following: disarmament and the "outlawry of war" by the State, and the "excommunication" and "renunciation" of war by the Church.

They earnestly supported the "outlawry of war" and hailed with enthusiasm the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928. They deep-

ened and maintained the social conviction that war is an evil and can never be holy. But beyond this, what kind of "pacifism" was expressed or implied in the great wave of antiwar pronouncements and the condemnations of war as "sin," which swept through these churches from about 1925 into the thirties? These testimonies on war and peace were ambiguous, and proved later to be confusing.¹²

The Antiwar Statements of Protestant Bodies

What did it mean, for example, for the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., to declare in 1929 that it "renounced war as an instrument of national policy"?—or for the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches in 1934 to call upon its members "to renounce war and all its works and ways and to refuse to support, sanction or bless it"? Pronouncements of this type continued into 1940, except that with the outbreak of European hostilities in 1939 there were additional statements urging the government to keep the United States out of war.

If one endeavors to understand the climate of opinion within which these resolutions were drafted and approved, he cannot conclude that these were pacifist convictions in the absolute sense of the Quaker tradition. Instead, they were aimed against war in general, and did not specify that in the event of war nonresistance or conscientious objection was a Christian duty. They were basically an expression of the popular concern for peace, in which it was assumed that "going to war" would be an unnecessary act of intervention or aggression by the United States. This is why the Methodist Council of Bishops, in January, 1942, saw "no inconsistency for individual Christians to give whole-hearted devotion to the immediate task [of winning the war] and at the same time strive to keep the Church, as a Church, free from official participation in war."

12. There were absolute pacifists who had helped to promote these resolutions and who reproached the churches in 1942 for "contradicting" their stand, since the churches were not demanding that the nation cease to fight.

The Ambiguous Nature of Liberal Protestant Pacifism

If there is confusion and uncertainty in contemporary American Protestantism as to the legitimacy of American military power and the role of force in international politics it may be traced in part to the ambiguous heritage of the pre-World War II period.

Much of the opposition to the North Atlantic Treaty in religious circles is the old pacifist opposition to any strategy that allows for military considerations. But this pacifist opposition is not composed of a solid bloc of absolute pacifists. It is similar to the mixed and ambiguous situation of the prewar period. There are the absolute pacifists who condemn war and military force as inherently evil and politically futile, who would like to see their nation voluntarily disarm, and who oppose military action under any circumstances. Also opposing the North Atlantic Treaty are some who do not take this extreme position but who think that peace can be served if the nation avoids any action that the Soviet Union might construe as "unfriendly" or "militaristic." They, too, condemn war as evil and futile, but do not commit themselves to absolute pacifism. As an alternative to the treaty they plead for disarmament through the United Nations and for American support of economic reconstruction without military commitments for Western Europe.

These positions have their parallel in the Protestantism of the thirties. Behind the many resolutions for disarmament and the outlawry of war, and for refusal to support war, there were the absolute pacifists who stood for conscientious objection in the event of war. There were also the semi-pacifist internationalists who wanted peace through international cooperation, but who also wanted American neutrality where the risks of war were involved. Thus pacifism and internationalism were ambiguously blended in the social pronouncements of the Protestant churches until the late thirties when pacifism and inter-

nationalism were difficult to combine.¹³

This is not to suggest that the pacifists were isolationists in principle. Those who were leaders or prominent supporters of denominational social action agencies were deeply concerned for *international* peace and justice, for a warless world and the brotherhood of mankind. So was the prominent interdenominational pacifist group—the Fellowship of Reconciliation, to which many of the Protestant pacifist clergy belonged. But the basic principles of liberal religious pacifism were such that it tended to become isolationist in effect.

The Political Consequences of Liberal Pacifism

Tension developed between liberal religious pacifism and the internationalist spirit of nonpacifist Christians because the former lacked any positive program that was relevant to the task of restraining international aggression. For example, the Fellowship of Reconciliation was against the strengthening of the collective security mechanisms of the League of Nations in 1936. The Fellowship urged immediate application of the Neutrality Act to prevent American participation in the Asiatic conflict in 1937; it affiliated with the Keep America Out of War Congress in 1938, and opposed Lend-Lease Aid and Selective Service Legislation in 1940-41. These policies were upheld on the ground that military coercion is evil, contrary to the teachings of Jesus, and politically futile, whereas "only moral and spiritual means" were justified and could be truly effective. With respect to Japanese aggression in China, and Nazi aggression in Europe, the Fellowship of Reconciliation sympathized with the victims, but denounced both defensive and aggressive warfare including the rights of States to condemn or restrain aggressors since "all are involved in sin and

13. Since both of these emphases were represented in the Federal Council of Churches, an "unstable equilibrium" resulted. See John A. Hutchison's analysis of the Federal Council: *We Are Not Divided* (New York, 1941), p. 205.

this would simply be vigilanteism on an international scale."¹⁴

Liberal religious pacifism endeavored to make the love ethic of the Sermon on the Mount into a political method as well as a motivating principle. It did much to disturb the conscience of the churches, and helped at least to remind them that no war could be holy, that war was an evil thing. But in the name of the "Christian way" the political policies of isolationism and neutrality were encouraged.

As the pacifists saw it, war or military commitments were evil, no good could be served by American action to discourage or restrain aggressors. But as some of the nonpacifists saw it there was little of virtue in American neutrality, since too many international neighbors were being victimized. If, in spite of its intentions, pacifism had the consequences of appeasement, how could it claim to be "right" and "effective" in the concrete historical situation?

Morals and Politics

If men want primarily to be "*right*," in the sense of personal conformity with a set of specific ideals or laws (such as the Sermon on the Mount interpreted as a moral code) they should devote themselves to the monastery, or to the separatist life of a religious colony. The Mennonite tradition, like that of the monastic orders, is realistic and consistent in recognizing that perfectionist ethics are not relevant to the political sphere. Because of the strife of interests, the struggle for power, and the hardness of men's hearts, the State by its very nature must have coercive power available for the enforcement of law and the restraint of evildoers. The State therefore cannot exist on the basis of the Sermon on the Mount, as the writers of the New Testament knew full well. In international politics, where there is no centralized State, where 60-odd sovereign states compete with one another for security and define justice in

14. See, for example, a Fellowship of Reconciliation statement on *The Far Eastern Situation*, New York, October, 1938.

terms of national self-interests, it is utterly futile to preach a perfectionist ethic which cannot regulate even a domestic society.

For those who seek to *increase peace in the world*, "right action" must be judged not only by its motive (to what extent does it aim "to serve the neighbor"?) but also by its consequences (will it help or hinder the prospects for peace, order, freedom, justice?). Those who are devoted to the neighbor's service for the sake of Christ must be prepared in politics (and in many other fields) to distinguish between the peace of Christ and the peace of this world. They will work for peace and justice for Christian reasons but will never expect any final or perfect achievements.

They will recognize and accept the struggle for political power as a constant phenomenon in human life. They will appreciate the wisdom of Pascal, the seventeenth century Christian who said: "Justice without force is impotent. Force without justice is tyrannical. We must therefore combine justice with force." For them there will be nothing novel or objectionable in this understanding of the risks and necessity of power, and of the need for its responsible use. Since they do not expect to *substitute* virtue for power, or morals for politics, they will seek to *discipline* the employment of power. They will seek, in short, to combine moral ideals with political wisdom. In pursuing this course they may turn with profit to the message of the Cleveland conference.

Contrast Between Cleveland and Quaker Proposals

There is no need here to summarize the conference report, which as a whole represents a new mood among churchmen and a more serious analysis of American power in relation to world affairs. The conference statement wisely stresses the many avenues of responsibility that are open to the nation, especially those which lie beyond the sphere of military power

and military commitments.¹⁵ In these respects there is much in common with the later statement on American-Russian relations released by the American Friends Service Committee.¹⁶

But the Cleveland statement is more inclusive of the range of responsibility in the use of American power. In recognizing the risks of military strength and military strategies, it is able nevertheless to say: "The people of the United States have a responsibility to help in preventing the extension by force and intimidation of Soviet Communist power. . . . We must maintain sufficient strength to convince Soviet Russia that attempts to impose an ideology by force cannot succeed."¹⁷

The Cleveland pronouncement at least recognizes in theory that the religious principles of trusteeship and responsibility apply to military power in the face of aggression. This is a new and more realistic note in Protestant interdenominational conferences—a note which was conspicuously lacking in the crusade for peace between the world wars.

In contrast, the Quaker statement is deficient because it is unable to recognize that military strategies may have a useful and constructive role. They gaze so steadfastly at the desirability of peace that they neglect the negative but important means which are required in facing a totalitarian system. They strain to believe that Stalin may have been sincere in speaking of the possibility of the peaceful coexistence of the communist and capitalist worlds, and they discount his many references to the inevitability of conflict. They are keenly aware that the Kremlin dislikes American military strength, and that other nations do not wish to be involved in a war between the two great powers. But they are oblivious to the request of European

15. Non-military commitments stressed at the conference included the quest for political settlements and for arms limitation, economic and technical aid to overseas peoples, the encouragement of human rights, understanding and support of the U.N. and its various agencies, the maintenance of Christian missions in the Far East and of diplomatic and economic contacts with China, etc.

16. *American-Russian Relations: Some Constructive Considerations* (Philadelphia, American Friends Service Committee, July, 1949).

17. *Message and Findings, op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

nations that a defensive military pact be achieved with the United States committed to the defense of Western Europe in the event of Soviet aggression. Almost all of the Quaker proposals, to be successful, depend upon a change in Soviet policy, and there is no awareness here of the Soviet habit of bargaining only when they must. The Quakers stress patience and generosity without reference to any need for firmness in dealing with the Soviet Union.

Two Temptations To Be Avoided

If Christians in America are to be morally and intellectually prepared for the responsibilities which lie ahead they will need to reexamine their basic assumptions about the nature and role of power in human affairs, and they will need to recognize and to cope with many unwelcome facts about international politics. Many strategic issues similar to the North Atlantic Pact, or to the assistance of Greece and Turkey, will no doubt arise in the future. The churches may not need to take an official stand on such questions, or they may be too divided to take an effective stand, but they still will have to face the basic question: are they helping the nation to achieve maturity in the employment of power?

The churches will surely fail in the performance of their task if they cease to challenge their members and fellow-citizens who impatiently and self-righteously speak of "preventive war." The major task in American foreign policy is clearly that of aiding the economic and social health of the non-Communist world, with readiness to negotiate with the Communist world wherever it may be done without the sacrifice of democracy and freedom. But this major and difficult task cannot succeed without the maintenance of preponderant military power in the non-Communist world. Whether the leadership within the Protestant churches is prepared to recognize this, remains a matter of doubt. The idealist heritage of the nineteenth century and the pacifist mentality of the twenties and thirties are a han-

dicap, since they fail to reckon with the problem of power in international politics.

The major temptation of a powerful nation may be to use its power irresponsibly. But the major temptation in liberal Protestantism for twenty-five years has been to neglect the responsibilities of power.

Historical Roots of American Immaturity

Americans have been accustomed for the greater part of a century and a half to settling their domestic conflicts by propaganda, debate, pressure groups, political parties and ballots.¹⁸ They are accustomed to the strife of interests and the struggle for power in their political, economic and social life, and seldom expect it to cease. But during most of this period they enjoyed the relative security of isolation, afforded by two ocean barriers plus the interest of Britain in discouraging any European power with designs on the North American continent.

It was not until the period of the two world wars that the nation had to reckon with an interdependent world, the diminishing security of ocean barriers, and the importance to its own security of the Atlantic community. With World War II there also came the exhaustion of former centers of power in Europe and Britain, and the emergence of the Soviet Union and the United States as the two primary world powers, with the latter possessing an industrial capacity roughly equivalent to the rest of the world.

The longer period of domestic security and the relatively sudden involvement in two global conflicts help to account for the tendency in American thinking to approach international politics as if it were a domestic affair. It is easy to preach peace in the image of American democracy from within the security and stability which this nation has fortunately enjoyed. It was easy for Americans to assume that once a United Na-

18. There is the great exception of the Civil War and some minor exceptions that may here be ignored.

tions was created they could be released from the burdens which they had to shoulder from 1941 to 1945.

Power and International Politics

But the existence of international organization is no guarantee that it will be used for cooperation by the sovereign states who compose its membership. The United Nations is a pledge to seek peace plus a vast array of parliamentary machinery which exists as a means for nations to use or misuse according to their interests and abilities. The basic factors in the international scene are not the pledge contained in the Charter or the various organs of the U.N., but sixty-odd nations which seek power and security amidst the anarchy and insecurity of the multiple state system.

There is no monopoly of physical force in the hands of a supranational state, as there is such a monopoly in the police force of an established national government. Neither is there a sufficient community of interests and standards in the international scene to provide a central government capable of avoiding tyranny and civil war.

If by "power" we mean control over the minds and actions of others, it is obvious that the struggle for power is constant in both domestic and international life. But in the former, under a stable government, the struggle is waged by political action without violence. In the international struggle for power, where nations compete with one another for survival and security and lack common standards of justice and law, military power and the threat of war is an intrinsic element in politics. Nations seek either to keep the power they have or to add to the power they have—to preserve the status quo (the comparative distribution of power) if it is favorable to their interests, or to change the status quo.

The Inevitability of the Pursuit of Power

International politics therefore cannot avoid being "power politics," in the sense that the desire for power to influence

and if need be to coerce others is universal among nation-states. This is not to imply that all nations are aggressive, since many of them desire power only to preserve their security. It is the very *structure* of the multiple state system, resting upon nationalism and national sovereignty, that prevents the struggle for power from being waged without the threat of military coercion.

It is fruitless for those who seek peace to condemn power, whether it be the psychological power to influence others or the military strength to coerce them. In domestic life one does not condemn the existence of police unless he is an anarchist or a criminal. In international politics there is no central police under a representative government with substantial public opinion and supranational loyalties to support law, government and police. Under these structural conditions the only means which nations have for defending their interests or pursuing their objectives are diplomacy and war.

The United Nations provides new channels for public diplomacy, but competing national interests frequently use these channels for propagandist debates. The United Nations Charter also calls for an international police force, which big-power disagreements have prevented it from achieving. But since the security function of the U.N. presupposes the unanimity of the great powers, which does not exist, the U.N. is constitutionally unable to act as a policeman against any of them.

False Approaches to Morals and Politics

The moral argument that states have no right to condemn or restrain aggressors, since this would be "vigilanteism on an international scale," is completely irrelevant. In the absence of a world-state and in the face of an aggressor "vigilanteism" is the only alternative to appeasement and slavery.

It is equally unwise for religious or other agencies to advance the argument that defensive military pacts, such as the North Atlantic Treaty, are immoral and futile because they are a form of "power politics." It is all the more questionable when these

are the same agencies that support the right of organized labor to conduct strikes.¹⁹ If diplomacy is the counterpart in world politics of collective bargaining in industrial relations, war or the threat of war are the ultimate resort of a desperate nation and are the international equivalent of strikes and the threat of strikes in industrial democracy.

It is imperative to understand the forces which determine political relations among nations. There is no virtue in beating one's head against a stone wall, especially if the claim is made that one can thereby demolish the wall.

The Persistent Problem of Power

If the "wall" that stands between the order of domestic society and the anarchy of world politics is to be removed, so that world politics can be "domesticated," it is obvious that world government is required. But it is one thing to recognize this ultimate requirement, and quite another to face the task of transition—from the multiple state system to a world-state that can operate with justice while having a monopoly upon police power. In order to function successfully, a world government must be able (1) not only to prevent a civil war by police action, but (2) to have a prior claim upon the political loyalty of an overwhelming majority of the global population, and (3) it must enable contending groups to expect at least approximate justice or it will lose the sanction of public opinion which is necessary for the reign of law and the minimum use of the police.

The magnitude of this task is overwhelming, and it clearly implies a long-run program involving many millions of people and several future generations. If it can be achieved in the unforeseeable future, the problem of disciplining power in the interest of justice will be more difficult than it is within our present domestic society. In the meantime the responsibilities

19. See, for example, the testimony against the North Atlantic Pact by a representative of the Religion and Labor Foundation, *North Atlantic Treaty*, Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, *op. cit.*

of power rest in the hands of nation-states, and the traditional methods of diplomacy and power-politics cannot be discarded. They can only be qualified and disciplined within limits, with very gradual and risky excursions toward limited world government as in the United Nations majority-sponsored plan for world control of atomic energy.²⁰

There is no real escape from the problems of power. There is no way of resolving politics and ethics into an ideal harmony. If both cynicism and despair are to be avoided, American Protestantism must develop with much greater care its understanding of man and of international politics. For the Christian there is an infinite meaning in the quest for world order, even though no action is possible which will lead to perfection.

20. It should be noted that this plan stands *in between* "world government" and the requirements of security in the sovereign state system, as any realistic approach must do. For example, the big powers would be participating in such a world agency with the assurance of (1) thorough inspection, and (2) atomic production plants so located that no major nation would be without the means of making weapons in the event that the plan broke down.

Good Reading

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Comments on "Power Politics and the Christian Conscience"

***By Walter W. Van Kirk, Executive Secretary,
Department of International Justice and
Goodwill, Federal Council of Churches***

I am deeply indebted to Vernon H. Holloway for his penetrating analysis of the quandary in which American Christians find themselves respecting the problem of power in world politics.

It must be conceded that within the Protestant community, at home and abroad, there is a conflict of views as to what the churches should say and do in relation to the practice of nation-states. That this is so should surprise no one, least of all a professor of Congregationalist persuasion in a university of Baptist background. Happily there is in Protestantism no authoritarian voice by which policy, ecclesiastical or political, is defined. The Protestant appeal is to conscience. And conscience, to Protestants, is not congenial to regimentation.

Protestants Cannot Expect Unanimity

Protestants, in the flesh, are mortals. Lacking omniscience they are prone to error. What does Dr. Holloway expect? Does he expect that Protestants, steeped in the traditions of individual judgment, shall suddenly and with one accord, achieve the blessed state of unanimity respecting political policy?

In their quest for world order the primary responsibility of Christians is to speak to the churches, not to the state. Christians, as such, are not specialists in political action. Their job is to develop a national conscience to which the state will be responsive in the exercise of its power. Christians should seek to clarify goals which throw light upon the problems of our contemporary society. In the pursuit of these goals Christians will not always agree as to the next steps. Dr. Holloway appears to be more disturbed about this than I am.

As a matter of fact the divergence of views respecting such issues as the North Atlantic Treaty and the Military Assistance Program proves that Christians are *thinking* about the moral use of American power. They are no longer content to take refuge in pacifist proclama-

tions, nor in denominational resolutions. Christians now realize that they must get down into the arena of everyday life and battle for their ideals. The important thing is not that Christians differ but that they are fighting for what they believe to be the application of moral principles to concrete situations. They are more realistic as to attainable goals while at the same time they are no less devoted to ultimate ends.

Broad Area of Agreement Among Christians

Dr. Holloway's presentation does not sufficiently highlight the fact that American Christians, despite their differences on political specifics, desire for their country a foreign policy that is dictated by considerations of decency, fair play, international goodwill, and reconciliation. There is not among American Protestants any appreciable support for a "holy war" as a way out of the ideological conflict in which the world of nations is caught. Pacifists and non-pacifists may not agree at this point, but they are fairly unanimous in the judgment that the use of force is no solution for the world's ills. This they have said time and time again. Dr. Holloway knows this. He should have said so.

Moreover, the area of agreement among American Protestants is more comprehensive than a reading of Dr. Holloway's paper would lead one to believe. Almost without exception Protestants supported the European Recovery Program. They did this in the conviction that "it can be one of history's most momentous affirmations of faith in the curative power of freedom and in the creative capacity of free men." They supported this program not as a strategy in the waging of a "cold war" but as a means of economic, political and moral reconstruction.

At the end of the first world war there was some disagreement among Christians as to American membership in the League of Nations. There were pacifists who believed that to support the League was to support military sanctions. At the end of the second world war the support of the American churches for the United Nations Organization was well-nigh unanimous. Dr. Holloway rightly points to the efforts of American Protestants to influence the shaping of the Charter. They exercised this influence not alone through pulpit utterances but in across-the-table negotiations in the White House, in the State Department, and at San Francisco. I know. I was a party to those negotiations.

American Protestants are agreed that atomic energy must be con-

trolled internationally. They are agreed that sovereign states, over a period of time, must relinquish certain prerogatives of their sovereignty to world organization. They are agreed that the moral authority of the United Nations must be invoked for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The part played by American Christians in the negotiations leading up to the proclamation by the United Nations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is worthy of commendation. Protestants, in the main, are agreed that the organs of the U.N. should be used to achieve independence and self-government for subject and dependent peoples. They are agreed that the "Point Four" program, enunciated by President Truman and endorsed by the U.N., is deserving of their moral and political support. I could go on but if I did the editor would get out his scissors.

Protestants may not be giving sufficient thought to the dynamics of power politics. They may not be doing this in an academic sense. But they are doing this in a practical sense. They are subscribing to ideas and supporting measures the effect of which can only be to bring American political power under the compulsion of the Christian ethic.

***Comment by E. Raymond Wilson, Executive
Secretary, Friends Committee on National
Legislation***

In "Power Politics and the Christian Conscience," Vernon Holloway reveals the confusion among church spokesmen when they face the problems of the statesman. The issues Dr. Holloway poses for the advocates and opponents of the use of military power are not easy for anyone seeking to be intellectually honest about Christian responsibility in the world today.

While challenging the idea of a preventive war, the author contends that "the major task in American foreign policy is clearly that of aiding the economic and social health of the non-communist world, with readiness to negotiate with the communist world wherever it may be done without the sacrifice of democracy and freedom. But this major and difficult task *cannot succeed without the maintenance of preponderant military power in the non-communist world.*" (Italics supplied.)

There has to be a more adequate answer found than the tendency of pacifism to equate neutrality with peace on the one hand (which I join with the author in deploring) or the tendency of the non-pacifist to equate military power with true police action. I cannot forget the words of Dr. Ernest Fremont Tittle some years ago at the international conference of Christians at Princeton: "The so-called realism of 1918 turned out to be dust and ashes long before 1939."

Inadequacies of Military Power

The United States has had tremendous military power in terms of atom bombs, a larger navy than all the navies put together, a large air force, huge industrial power and a military establishment that overshadows the federal budget, but all of that did not prevent the spread of Communist ideology into Czechoslovakia nor through China. The arms put in the hands of the Nationalists in China by the American taxpayers soon found their way into the hands of the Communists. Arms in the hands of the Americans, British and French in the twenties when Germany was disarmed did not prevent the rise of Hitler in Germany, when the German people lacked jobs and a sense of security. We have had until recently, and probably still have, a preponderance of atom bombs, but they are a weapon of extermination, not a police weapon, and certainly have proved ineffective in combatting the spread of anti-democratic ideas since 1945. Are we going to wake up too late to the realization of the bankruptcy of military power to win friends? Or that military power threatens many nations with bankruptcy?

The partial paralysis of democracy in the post-war world has been its tendency to try to go in two opposite directions at once. While working with increasing zeal and devotion for the United Nations idea, the United States has spent approximately a thousand dollars on its own military establishment to one on the United Nations, and its expenditures of manpower were even less than that tiny proportion. The "bold new program" of aiding technologically an underdeveloped world—now being wooed by communism and by democracy—has been put down for a possible 45 million dollars, if Congress appropriates that much, or less than one half of one per cent of what the U.S. spends on "power." Right now we are witnessing a drive in Washington for the extension of Selective Service as a means of bolstering the Atlantic Pact.

Most Imperative Step in History

There is no assured or permanent peace in a polarized world of two competing military power blocs. There must be universal disarmament and great strides toward a world government. I do not want to minimize the problem for I believe this the most difficult but imperative step in history. Mankind must not accept as eternal the idea that "military power and the threat of war is an intrinsic element in politics" any more than the assertion that slavery was eternal. The churches should not forget that a sizable portion of the Protestant Church defended slavery as a divine institution until the Civil War, and had they led the way in its elimination the Civil War might not have occurred.

The need of the hour is for prophetic leadership on the part of the churches in seeking solutions of the problems and tensions that otherwise will lead to war. The Quaker proposals, to be successful, depend not only upon a change in Soviet policy, but changes in United States policy also. They were put forward humbly as working proposals, and we hope others will come forward with better ones.

Nor should we overlook that what Vernon Holloway keeps calling "power" is basically people—human beings. Gandhi, who didn't even claim to be a Christian, exhibited a power of life and spirit that moved millions and changed historic political patterns. He would be the last to claim that he had been "successful." But he demonstrated qualities that put most of us in the Christian community to shame. In a world of potential atomic annihilation what is needed is an atomic energy of the spirit, sacrificial and redemptive and compelling, and directed toward eliminating the threat of aggression, not by ignoring it, but by overcoming it.

***Comment by John C. Bennett, Professor of
Christian Theology and Ethics, Union
Theological Seminary, New York City***

Vernon Holloway is one of the wisest interpreters of the problems of foreign policy in the American churches. He has consistently based his thinking upon sound theological presuppositions instead of allowing himself to reflect the prevailing forms of secular idealism. I agree

fully with his account of the actual differences in the Church and with his judgment as to relative merits of the positions that he describes.

It is frustrating to discover that the Church is unable to present a united Christian witness to the nation and to government. This difficulty is not only characteristic of Christian thinking about foreign policy; it is even more true of economic questions. The controversy over the Amsterdam statement about Communism and Capitalism and the serious chasm in the Church that seems to be deepening at the moment between those who seek to return to a purer Capitalism out of fear of "statism" and those who favor the general tendency of the New Deal, are indications of what I mean. It is to be hoped that a more general understanding of Christian teaching about human nature and history may dispel some of the illusions that divide us, but I doubt if we can expect to have agreement the normal thing on any issue that involves either technical judgments about cause and effect or precarious predictions about the consequences of any policy. Take, as an example, the question of recognition of Communist China. I expect that this will be as divisive an issue in the Church as any of those discussed by Holloway, but those who agree fully with his presuppositions about power will disagree here because of differences of judgment concerning the effect of recognition upon the future development of Communist China.

My only criticism of this article is that I believe that Professor Holloway might have made more of the consensus on international problems that has come to exist in spite of the differences over pacifism that still cause much confusion. In the recent war there did develop a form of non-pacifism which became the dominant position in the Church and it involved an important area of agreement between pacifists and non-pacifists. It was this development that may have kept the Church from splitting in a serious way during the war.

Today this Christian non-pacifism shows itself in opposition to the idea of a preventive war. It appears in the development of a common view on the importance of constructive resistance to Communism. Pacifists and non-pacifists will differ on the Atlantic Pact but both will oppose a policy that trusts primarily to military force in dealing with Russia and Communism. There has developed in Protestantism a position about the way of resisting Communism that is recognizably differ-

ent from the outlook of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and from that of a large part of the secular press.

Weakness of American Christian Idealism

Holloway does put his finger on the chief weakness of American Christian idealism—the tendency to evade the problem of power. Today I believe that it is essential for America to help to preserve a balance of power in the world in order to discourage Russia from using military force as a short-cut to the extension of her power. This is necessary to prevent war or at least to increase the chances of preventing war. But this idea is shocking to many Christian idealists who underrate the aggressive tendencies in Russian Communism or who believe that there is some direct way to the Russian heart that will persuade Russia to change her policy or who assume that the vicious circle between Russia and America can be broken by our unilateral action. This type of idealism fails to take account of the fact that the men whose power is most decisive in the Communist world are themselves insulated against the moral effect of any policy on our part that is not backed by economic and military power. This is the tragic fact about our world and there is no escape from the dilemma which it has created. Christian responsibility does not consist in thinking up the most ideal policy for a world that does not exist but rather in finding the most effective way in the actual world to contain aggressive forms of power while we do what is possible to prepare for a new situation which may offer better alternatives for action than any which are open to us now.

Utopia or Bust

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a well-known churchman and intrepid leader of the Public-Housing-Without-Discrimination Campaign, arose and said: "Honorable colleagues, I have expended blood, sweat and tears for the original Housing Bill. Now this heroic plan, destined to save our commonwealth, has been tragically emasculated. I cannot understand why my fellow Sociocrats, who believe in brotherhood, have pledged to vote for this satanic compromise. . . . This is no time for half-way measures. . . . Humanity is at the crossroads. . . . A half a million homes—yes, but *not* with discrimination. . . . Before we cast our ballots, let us remember the words of that great prophet: 'Mankind must choose this day between utopia or hell—there is no middle ground!'"

Mr. Allornun sat down as the votes were cast in tense silence. The Housing Bill was defeated by one vote—the vote of a man who believed he had given his very life for brotherhood, for a decent world, for peace in our time. The millions who looked to him for succor could not understand.

As the legislators walked down from Capitol Hill that day, a reporter overheard one congressman say: "When will the children of light learn that politics is the art of the possible?"

"I don't know," replied his colleague, "but perhaps moral action, as well as political, must take place within the cruel world of the possible."

Utopia or Bust

[A guest contribution to Ray Gibbons' column, "On to Action,"
by Ernest Lefever.]

The other day as I was pondering my responsibility as a Christian in political questions, I came upon a story I would like to pass on. To conceal the identity of persons mentioned I will use fictitious names.

Some years ago a bill was introduced into the U.S. Congress, calling for the government to finance and administer the construction of 500,000 low-cost dwellings. According to the bill families would be assigned homes on the basis of need, without regard to race, religion or national origin. "What could be more democratic and more necessary than this," cried the Sociocrats enthusiastically. "We must forge this bill into law at the earliest possible moment." Church, civic and educational groups throughout the country threw their support behind the proposal.

But the Conservocrats, while acknowledging the desperate need for houses, were unalterably opposed to the measure. "Houses should be built by private enterprise," they insisted. The Doctors' Association said it would pave the way for "socialized medicine." The Manufacturers League opposed the bill because it meant higher taxes. "The Housing Bill has been hatched up by the Reds and modernists," snorted the Council of "Bible-Believing" Churches. All the opponents agreed that it threatened the "American Way of Life."

As the debate grew more intense the controversial bill was altered and amended. One rider was attached requiring housing projects to conform to the pattern of racial segregation where restrictive state laws were in force. The principle of non-discrimination was destroyed, and everyone knew that the Conservocrats did it to kill the measure. Incensed by the compromising amendment, the Sociocrats nevertheless decided to support the bill because "500,000 new houses with some discrimination is better than no houses at all."

Forces backing the bill outstripped the opposition in numbers if not in financial support, but the congressmen were about equally divided. Just as the bill was to be put to a vote, Senator Allornun (S-Ind.),

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